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DRAFT OF SPEECH

BY

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Some years ago, when I was a medical student at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, I had to listen to my share of commencement speakers. As they poured their oratory over our defenseless heads - somewhat as I intend to do to you this afternoon -I used to recall a wise proverb that we have in one of the provinces of the Philippines. We say, "King salitang dakal lalo ing kabalatungan," which I think can be translated this way: "Out of too many words comes error." In other words, if you talk too much you are liable to get into trouble.

I hope you will not feel, by the time I am finished today, that I have talked too much. I do not want to get into trouble.

First of all, I want to thank you, President Mayer, and the trustees and faculty of your college, for the honor you are paying today to the gallant leader of the Filipino people, President Manuel L. Quezon. And I thank you, too, for the honor you give to me.

We Filipinos, I think you will agree, can be counted among the greatest friends that America has. Our homeland, which now lies under the heel of the brutal enemy, is many thousands of miles away from your shores. It might have been easy for us, perhaps, to have fallen into the trap of believing that America was no more than a group of Government officials in Washington, or a newspaper in Chicago, or a visiting journalist come to Manila on a flying visit. Fortunately, we knew better. We know America as a broad, prosperous land of honest human beings; a land that has come closest to learning the secret of human relationships; that has shown the world how a democracy can work, in practice as well as in spirit; that has proven that honest men can be good neighbors, living side by side in harmony and understanding. And I believe the best examples of this revolutionary, yet simple, philosophy are the friendly folk of the American Middle West, people like you young men and women who are now to count themselves as alumni of this College.

I am neither a politician nor a political philosopher, I am simply a soldier and physician. But I have seen America in action in the Philippines through the past generation, and I have learned to respect you as well as to like you. I have seen the operation of American policies, of American principles and practices, that are too little known to the American people themselves. And this afternoon I want to tell you something of your own history -- a history of which you can be proud for all time.

America first came to the Philippines in 1898, in the person of Commodore Dewey. There was trouble in those early years, trouble brewed out of misunderstanding and distrust. But gradually we Filipinos

began to realize that here was something new in the record of imperialism. Here was a great and powerful nation assuming control of a weaker people, not for the purpose of exploitation but for the purpose of liberation. You came with the desire to expand the democratic principles which have worked so well in your own country. You brought school teachers and engineers, able administrators and doctors; but you brought more than that. You brought the promise of freedom for the Philippines. You talked the language of liberty. You understood that we Filipinos had an undying faith in ourselves -- that we were self respecting enough to desire self-government and independence. This was not so different from your own history. It made sense to you. And so, instead of treating our islands as a far-off slave-colony fit only to be milked of its riches, you worked with us, studied with us, advanced with us. You did not isolate yourselves from us, nor did you isolate us from you. And, in time, you set a definite time when you would redeem your pledge of Philippine independence. With your encouragement, we of the Philippines prepared our own democratic Constitution and established our own Commonwealth Government. We were on the road to complete and recognized independence when the treacherous Japanese attack came.

On that fateful day in December 1941, your policy of friendship and cooperation was vindicated. The policy that had sometimes been attacked in this country as impractical and visionary turned out to have been hard-boiled and realistic. In American slang, you might say that it "paid-off"

It paid off in terms of twenty thousand Filipino lives laid down in resistance to the common enemy. It paid off in the speed with which the whole Filipino people rose, as one man, to oppose the foe. It paid off in the continuing resistance which even Premier Tojo was recently forced to admit is still going on in the hills and forests of the Philippines.

Perhaps that phrase, "Paid off" is not the right one. No one in the Philippines considers his friendship with America to be a matter of paying a debt. America gave the Philippines her hand in good faith. And, when the crisis came, the Philippines gave her hand to America in equal good faith. Here, I believe, is the secret of sensible international relations in the future. Strip away the hollow phrases of diplomacy, and look beneath them for the warm heart of the people. Fifty years ago, the statesmen of the world would have laughed at the suggestion that Americans and Filipinos could ever see eye to eye, could ever work out a healthy relationship. But there was no laughter, anywhere in the world, at the Filipinos and Americans who sweated and fought and died in the foxholes of Bataan, without discrimination or distrust, with only their mutual respect and their common faith in freedom to reinforce them through those long, terrible months of hell.

Let me give you some of the figures of that Battle. Only 16,000 American troops were in my country when the Japanese attacked, 300,000 strong. Pearl Harbor lay shattered, a smoking, twisted mass of wreckage. The Japanese believed that the conquest of the Philippines would be a simple matter of a few days, strenuous only to the extent of wiping out a handful of Americans. Then, they believed, the conquest of the entire Southwest Pacific would proceed apace -- there was Australia and New Zealand ahead, and later Hawaii, and then -- who knows? -- perhaps the American mainland.

But a bitter surprise was in store for them. The devotion of the seventeen million Filipinos linked them solidly with America. Ninety-two thousand Filipino soldiers rushed to the side of the Americans, all under the command of that great soldier, General Douglas MacArthur. Overnight, the Filipinos became a worldwide symbol of hard-hitting, dogged courage. Twenty thousand Filipino soldiers were killed in the Battle of the Philippines, lying in their jungle graves beside their American fellow-heroes. For months that Battle raged, and when it was done the United States and the other United Nations had been given a precious respite in which to mobilize their far-flung Pacific defenses. On the bloodstained peninsula of Bataan had been fought one of the greatest delaying actions in all military history.

Those are the facts, simple, undeniable and understandable. They are the answer to those who do not have faith in international cooperation. They are an answer written in the blood of the Filipino and American martyrs to the cause of human freedom.

A few days ago, one of your American naval officers said this to me:

"General, when the chips were down and we desperately needed somebody to stay in there and help us stand off those Japanese sons of....heaven, the Filipinos didn't let us down. and, believe me, this country could use more of that kind of friends."

My answer to that now is this: You will continue to have that kind of friends, and more and more of them, if you deal with other peoples as you have dealt with us. Learn the lesson of the American-Philippine adventure, and you need not fear the voyage through the uncharted seas of future international cooperation.

Suppose we take a closer look at that history. The American administration of the Philippines marked the beginning of a new era for the Filipinos -an era of hope, of progress, of self-realization. For, when the Americans came, they brought along with them the basic symbol of democracy -- the schoolbook. No longer was the Filipino nation to thirst in vain for knowledge. At last we had attained our human right to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, universal education, the right to vote, and freedom of religion. The attitude of the Filipino people, and of such leaders as Manuel L. Quezon (who had fought as a major against

the American occupation forces), underwent a profound change as they realized more and more that America truly intended to give independence to the Philippines as soon as feasible. The spirit of Filipino hostility and skepticism was gradually replaced by a spirit of cooperation and mutual good will.

The policy pursued by the United States is dramatically illustrated in a story told by Luther Parker, an American educator sent to the Philippines in the early years of the American administration. Parker landed at Manila on a transport bearing six hundred Americans school teachers, who had come to bring enlightenment to the great mass of the people. Parker arrived at a small village on the island of Luzon, where the children crowded about him crying in their native language "Teach us English ! Teach us English!" Parker took one of the children on his knee, and the first four English words he taught that child were: "I am a Filipino." Here is the epitome of the policy which America set out to accomplish in the Philippines. Parker did not teach the child to say: "I am an American subject." Instead, he began at once to create in the child's mind the awareness of his own importance as a Filipino and of his own responsibility to prepare himself for citizenship in a free and independent country.

That was the real symbol of American policy. It was made law in 1934, when the Philippine Independence Act was passed by Congress, and signed by President Roosevelt. This Act, the last step toward fulfilling the promise made by the United States regarding Philippine independence, provided that the people of the Philippines should draft a constitution and set up a democratic government capable of assuming all of the functions of an independent republic at the end of a ten-year transition period.

Under the Tydings-McDuffie Act, the Filipino people proceeded at once to draft such a constitution and to establish the transitional Commonwealth Government. The Philippine constitution in most respects resembles that of the United States. On November 15, 1935, the Cornmonwealth of the Philippines was inaugurated, with two true statesmen, Manuel L. Quezon and Sergio Osmena, as President and vice-president respectively. For the people of the Philippines, the long-standing aspiration for independence was finally coming to a happy conclusion, in a spirit of complete cooperation, friendship and mutual trust between the Philippines and the United States.

About the middle of 1941, President Quezon, foreseeing inevitable war began to gear our country to meet all eventualities. On August 19, 1941, on the occasion of his birthday, he delivered a speech by radio addressed to Vice President Wallace and through him, to the people of the United States. On that memorable occasion President Quezon said:

"In this great national emergency, the stand of the Filipino people is clear and unmistakable. We owe loyalty to America and we are bound to her by bonds of everlasting gratitude. Should the United States enter the war, the Philippines would follow her and fight by her side, placing at her disposal all our manpower and all our material resources, however limited these might be. We stand with the United States in life and in death."

Then came December 7, 1941; without warning at Pear Harbor, Midway and in the Philippines – Japan attacked. As President Quezon has said: "The Filipino people fought back because they knew that America had made a promise and that she would keep that promise. When we fought for your flag we knew we were fighting for our own freedom. When we resisted the invasion of our country, we did so because we knew the Philippines was our country not only de facto but de jure. And we were loyal to you, to your flag and to your country, not because under international law we owed you that allegiance, but because you have won our undying friendship and affection -- because you did by us what no other colonizing power has done by the people who had fallen under their sway. The presence of your flag in the Philippines was a symbol of our freedom. It was there only to allow you to finish the work you had started to do -- to help get up an independent Philippine Republic."

Much has been said and written about the magnificent stand made by the combined forces of the American and Philippine Armies in Luzon, Bataan, and Corregidor. I saw those boys fight and I can assure you that they deserve fully every bit of the praise that has been given to them.

The Congressional Medal of Honor was awarded to Sergeant Jose Calugas, Battery "B," 88th Field Artillery, Philippine Scouts. The citation reads: "The action for which the award was made took place near Culis, Bataan, Philippine Islands, on January 16, 1942. A battery gun position was bombed and shelled by the enemy until one gun was put out of commission and all of the cannoneers were killed or wounded. Sergeant Calugas, a mess sergeant of another battery, voluntarily and without orders ran 1000 yards across the steel-swept area to the gun position. There he organized a volunteer squad which placed the gun back in commission and fired effectively against the enemy although the position remained under constant and heavy Japanese artillery fire."

And then there is the story of that memorable battle of February 15, 1942, in which the Filipino soldiers from the Mountain Province especially distinguished themselves. Let me quote General MacArthur's communique: "During a recent enemy offensive, the 20th Japanese Infantry made an attack on a position held by a single Igorot company. To a man the Igorots died in their foxholes without flinching or thought of retreat but exacting a tremendous toll from the Japanese. To restore the situation, our high command

ordered an immediate counter-attack by a tank unit, supported by the Infantry. The Infantry soldiers were Igorots, eager to even the score of their lost tribesmen."

"The bamboo jungles and the heavy, irregular terrain of the section of the front were almost impenetrable and apparently made it impossible for the tanks to operate. Without a word the Igorot commander hoisted his men to the tops of the tanks in order that they might guide the machines through the matted morass of underbrush, thickets and trees. The exposed Igorot soldiers on top of the tanks served as the eyes of the American drivers. The guides signaled the drivers with a stick, and with an automatic pistol fired continuously as the unit closed in on the enemy. Bataan has seen many wild mornings, but nothing to equal this. No quarter was asked and none was given. Always above the din of battle roared the fierce shouts of the Igorots as they rode the tanks and fired their pistols. When the attack was over, the remnants of the tanks and of the Igorots were still there but the 20th Japanese Infantry was completely annihilated."

In recounting the story of the battle to a group of his officers, General MacArthur said: "Many desperate acts of courage and heroism have fallen under my observation on many fields of battle in many parts of the world. I have seen forlorn hopes become realities. I have seen last-ditch stands and innumerable acts of personal heroism that defy description. But for sheer breath-taking and heart-stopping desperation, I have never known the equal of those Igorots riding the tanks. Gentlemen, whenever you repeat the story, stand in tribute to those gallant Igorots."

The young Filipinos and Americans who died on Bataan and elsewhere were brothers-in-arms in a battle that will live forever in the annals of gallantry. Their courage and their sacrifice will shine the brighter in the course of the years as we realize more and more how much they meant to us who have been left behind to carry on; especially, when we remember that they were fighting for democracy, peace and tranquillity of existence.

I saw those men fight. I was with them through their terrible ordeal. I saw untrained Filipino soldiers, hardly out of their teens, turn into veteran soldiers overnight. I saw your American boys, most of whom had never been under fire, fighting like heroes. I saw the wounded suffering quietly, and the Japanese bombs dropping viciously on the field hospitals clearly marked with the red cross of mercy. I saw the Japanese planes roaring continuously overhead, and the shells from the Japanese artillery crashing everywhere, and the snipers' bullets whipping through the underbrush.